



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Re: Heinrich Lang

Serial No.: 10/053,830

Filed: 01/22/2002

For: LOCKABLE REARVIEW MIRROR
ASSEMBLY

Examiner: Shafer, Ricky D.

Group No.: 2872

Docket No.: LMX-69-CON
(022946.00129RCE)

Mail Stop Appeal Brief- Patents
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

APPEAL FROM THE FINAL REJECTION OF 11/16/2007

1. *Party of Interest:*

The real party of interest is Lang Mekra North America, LLC

2. *Related Appeals and Interferences:*

There are no other appeals or interferences which affect or will be affected by the Board's decision known to Appellant.

3. *Status of Claims:*

Claims 1-17 were originally presented. The PTO action of 2/25/2003 required restriction, with claim 1 being held as a linking claim, claim 2 being grouped as I, claims 3 and 4 being grouped as II, claims 5 and 6 being grouped as III, claims 7-10 being grouped as IV and claims 11-17 being grouped as V. It is noted that allowance of claim 1 results in claims 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 being allowed. Group IV, claims 7-10, was elected. The response of 12/04/2003 withdrew claims 2-6 and 11-17, cancelled claims 7-10 and

submitted new claims 18-25. The action of 3/16/2004 held newly submitted claims 18-24 to be directed to an invention independent and distinct from the originally claimed invention and withdrew these claims from consideration. The response of 6/01/2004 petitioned the holding of prior election set forth in the PTO action of 3/16/2004. The PTO action of 1/18/2007 held the petition arguments persuasive, withdrew the holding of prior election and presented an action on claims 1 and 18-25. Claims 1 and 18-25 were finally rejected in the PTO action of 11/16/2007 and claims 2-6 and 11-17 were held withdrawn from consideration.

Accordingly, the rejections of claims 1 and 18-25 are being appealed. Should the appeal be affirmed, claims 2-6 should be reinstated and found to also be allowable.

4. *Status of Amendments:*

All amendments have been entered.

5. *Summary of the Claimed Subject Matter:*

The invention is directed to that portion of a mirror assembly which includes the main mirror with its housing and the support arm. See page 2, lines 5-19. In the arrangement, the mirror assembly as provided is mounted to the vehicle by way of a clamping mechanism which likewise provides for simple demounting. See page 4, lines 3-8. The mirror assembly comprises a support structure 2 for mounting the assembly with the vehicle and a support arm 4 which includes mirror head 6. See page 5, lines 18-20 and page 6, lines 1-3. The support structure 2 includes a first part or shaped receptacle 38 which is secured with the vehicle. See page 7, second paragraph. The support structure also includes a support arm 4 mounting mirrors 8 and 10 which are arranged on the first part 38.

The support arm 4 also includes a second or insertable part 24 which is engagable with and removable from the sharp receptacle or first part 38.

A locking mechanism 52 is also carried by the support structure 2. The locking mechanism functions to lock the first and second parts 38, 26 together securing the support arm and mirror to the vehicle and provides a safety measure against theft. See page 7, ¶ 3. The locking mechanism 52 is key activated via key cylinder 52a mounted on the first part 38 of the support structure and rotatable latch member 52b which engages with the second part 26 of the support structure. See page 8, ¶ 3.

The assembly includes an adjustment mechanism 22 attached to the support arm 4, the adjustment mechanism allowing the support arm to be pivoted relative to the vehicle. See page 6, ¶ 4 and page 7 ¶ 1.

The mirror assembly of the invention comprises a support structure 2 for mounting the assembly to a vehicle which structure includes a first part 38 permanently connected with the vehicle and a second part 26 releasably connected with the first part. See page 7 ¶ 2. The second part or insertable component 26 is insertable onto the first part or clamp receptacle 38 and includes a clamping wedge 36 for clampingly locking the insertable component 26 with the clamp receptacle. See page 7 ¶ 2.

A support arm 4, which mounts at least one mirror 8, is disposed on the first part 38 of the support structure 2, while the second part 26 of the support structure 2 is disposed on the support arm 4 and a locking mechanism 52, carried by the support structure 2, operates to selectively lock the first and second parts 38, 26 together and to the vehicle. See page 7 ¶¶ 2 and 3. The locking mechanism includes a key cylinder 52a mounted on the first part 38 and a rotatable latch operated by the key cylinder to

selectively engage with the second part 26. See page 8 ¶ 3.

A snap-in detent arrangement 42, 38 is included with the first part 38. See page 7 ¶ 4. The arrangement includes spring element 42 fixed to the first part 38 which snaps into opening 44 in the first part 38 and a corresponding opening in the second part 26. Covers 48 and 49 are provided for covering support structure 2. See page 8 ¶ 2.

The rotating latch member 52b is hook-shaped. See Fig. 5a and page 8 ¶3.

6. *Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed:*

Claims 1, 18-25 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as unpatentable over claims 11 and 14 of U.S. Patent No. 6,554,346.

Claims 1 and 25 are also rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting over claim 8 of U.S. Patent No. 6,352,231.

Claims 1, 18, 21-25 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over Sillmann, '925.

7. *Arguments:*

Considering first the rejection of claims 1 and 18-25 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as unpatentable over claims 11 and 14 of U.S. Patent No. 6,554, 436.

The instant application is a division of the '436 patent. During the prosecution of that patent, claims 39-46 were submitted but, in the PTO action of 1/02/2002, were held to be directed to an invention independent or distinct from the elected invention. The examiner's position was because they "fail to include the details of a mirror housing and

a mirror assembly” as called for in the elected claims.

The instant divisional application presents claims which fail to include the details of the above elected invention, and therefore, are not subject to a double rejection.

Further, it is argued that the claims of the application are patentably distinct over claims 11 and 14 of the ‘436 patent. Claims 11 and 14 include the following limitations “moulded component,” “a main rear view mirror,” “a supplemental mirror above the main mirror” and providing “a direct view of at least two dead zones.” No one of these limitations appears in any of claims 1 and 18-25. Clearly, the claims are patentably distinct.

That the instant application is a divisional of the ‘436 patent dictates that no new matter is presented.

It is respectfully urged that the rejection set forth is improper and it is urged that the examiner’s position be reversed for the above-stated reasons.

Considering the rejection of claims 1 and 25 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 8 of U.S. Patent No. 6,352,231.

Claim 8 includes the following limitations, “a clamping reception fixture,” “a claim wedge disposed within the insertable component and slidable in a second clamping direction.” Neither claim 1 nor claim 25 calls for “a clamp wedge disposed within the insertable component and slidable in a second direction.” Claims 1 and 25 are directed to a locking mechanism for securing the support arm to the vehicle.

Claim 1 and dependent claim 25 are clearly patentably distinct from claim 8 of the ‘231 patent.

It is noted that the '231 patent and the '436 patent were filed on the same date to the same company. It is only because of the restriction requirement, which held that claims broader than those originally presented constituted a separate and distinct invention, that the instant application was filed.

For the above reasons, it is urged that the rejections of double patenting under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness be reversed.

Considering now the rejection of claims 1, 18, 21-25 under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over Sillmann '925.

It is noted that the object of Sillmann is to provide means to arrange a second mirror relative to a first mirror. This object is totally different from that of the instant application which is to provide a clamping mechanism which makes it possible to mount or demount a mirror assembly to or from a vehicle to protect against theft.

The Sillmann reference discloses a mirror arrangement for vehicles comprising a main mirror housing 1 connected to the vehicle by way of connection 2. The mirror housing includes a removable wall 3 which is connected to an auxiliary mirror 7. The removable wall 3 is connected to the auxiliary mirror 7 by linkage 6 or by arm 33 or by apparatus 32.

As seen in Figs 1, 5 and 7, auxiliary mirror 7 may be carried by wall 3 which is mounted in frame 17 of housing 1. The head 4 or arm 33 is rigidly fixed to wall 3 and is positionable to face the rear or front of the vehicle by rotation of wall 3. See page 7, lines 1-11 and page 8, ¶ 1.

Wall 3 carries a lock mechanism 25, 26 which activates bolt 22 into and out of locking position with recess 23 of housing 1 or 17.

The structure of Sillmann operates to position a second mirror in multiple positions relative to mirror housing carrying a main mirror. This operation is totally not related to the function and object of the instant invention.

The rejection states that Sillmann discloses a rearview mirror assembly comprising a support structure 1, 2, 9, 19, 33 for mounting a mirror to a vehicle. The structure includes a first part 9 having a permanent connection to the vehicle, a second part 19 disposed on a support arm 4, 33 having a mirror. An adjustment mechanism 6, 30, 70, a key activated locking mechanism 22, 25-27 including a key cylinder 25, 26 and a rotatable latch member 22 for selectively locking the first and second parts.

The rejection then states it would have been obvious to rearrange the location of the locking mechanism to position the key cylinder and latch member on the first part of the support structure.

Further, the limitation hook-shaped latch members are said to be well-known. Also, the limitation that the snap-in dent includes a spring element is said to be well-known.

The rejection then states it would have been obvious to modify any one of the snap-in detents 2, 6, 32, 70 of Sillmann to include a spring biased ball and socket joint.

First, considering independent claim 1, specific claim language directed to structure not taught by Sillmann is here pointed to.

The claim calls for support structure 2 for mounting a mirror to a vehicle having a first part 38 having a permanent connection to the vehicle and a second part 26. The claim further calls for a support arm 4 mounting at least one mirror to be disposed on the first part 38 and for the second part 26 to be disposed on the support arm 4.

Sillmann discloses no equivalent structure. The rejection references first part 9 (disclosed as a forward side of housing 1) to be connected to the vehicle by element 2 and a second part 19 (disclosed as an edge of wall 3) disposed on support arm 4 (disclosed as spherical head), 33 (disclosed as an arm connecting mirror 7 with wall 3). The rejection does not reference the limitation of -- a support arm disposed on said first part -- and the second part being disposed on the support arm -- nor is this structure taught.

The claim further calls for a locking mechanism 52 disposed on the support structure 2 for locking together the first part 38 and second part 26 for securing the mirror to the vehicle.

The claim further calls for the locking mechanism to include a key cylinder 52 mounted on the first part 38.

Sillmann discloses a locking mechanism 25 to include the key cylinder as carried by wall 3 or 19 which positions and locks wall 3 in reversible and rotated positions in with housing 1 for securing the first mirror with the second mirror in reversible positions. Wall 3 or 19 is discussed in the rejection as being the second part.

Claim 18, which depends from claim 1, calls for an adjustment mechanism attached to the support arm configured to allow the support arm to be pivoted.

Sillmann discloses no such structure. There is reference only to connection 2.

Claim 21, which depends from claim 1, calls for the support structure to include a snap-in detent arrangement 42. No such arrangement is disclosed in Sillmann.

Claim 22 further limits claim 21 by calling for the snap-in detent arrangement 42 to include a snap-in spring affixed to the first part 38 which snaps into a recess in the

second part 26.

The rejection states snap-in detent including a spring element are well-known. The arrangement of Sillmann does not call for a snap-in detent nor is reference made of the desirability of such type connection whether or not such elements are known, there is no motivation to provide one with the structure of Sillmann.

Claim 23 calls for a removable cover attachable to the first part 38.

Claim 24 calls for a removable cover attachable to the first part 38, covering the locking mechanism and snap-in spring element.

The rejection states Sillmann discloses a removable cover 1. The disclosure refers to 1 as a housing. No mention is made of removable. Further, housing 1 is referenced as the first part in the rejection. The locking mechanism is carried by wall 3 and is clearly not covered.

Clearly, neither the structure nor the objects of the invention set forth in the reference anticipates the structure or objectives as claimed.

For the reasons stated, it is believed that claims 1, 18-25 clearly define over the reference of the rejection. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejections be reversed and the claims found to be allowable.

8. *Appendix of Claims:*

Claim 1: A rearview mirror assembly for a vehicle, the rearview mirror assembly comprising:

a support structure for mounting the mirror assembly to the vehicle, the support structure including a first part having a substantially permanent connection to the vehicle and a second part;

a support arm mounting at least one mirror, disposed on said first part of the support structure and the second part of the support structure being disposed on the support arm; and

a locking mechanism disposed on the support structure for selectively locking together the first and second parts of the support structure for securing the support arm and mirror to the vehicle, the locking mechanism including a key activated mechanism including a key cylinder mounted on the first part of the support structure and a rotatable latch member operatively connected to and rotatable via the key cylinder for selectively lockingly engaging with the second part of the support structure.

Claims 2: A rearview mirror assembly as in claim 1, further including an adjustment mechanism attached to the support arm, the adjustment mechanism configured to allow the support arm to be pivoted relative to the vehicle.

Claim 3: A rearview mirror assembly as in claim 1, wherein the support structure first part includes a clamp receptacle affixed to the vehicle, and the support structure second part includes an insertable component inserted into the clamp receptacle in an inserting direction, further including a slidably installed clamping wedge on the insertable component, the wedge, upon pushing of the insertable component,

clampingly locking the insertable component and the clamping wedge to the clamp receptacle.

Claim 4: A rearview mirror assembly as in claim 3, wherein the clamping wedge is slidable on the insertable component in a direction at right angles to the inserting direction of the insertable component.

Claim 5: A rearview mirror assembly as in claim 1, wherein the support structure includes a snap-in detent apparatus.

Claim 6: A rearview mirror assembly as in claim 5, wherein the snap-in detent apparatus includes a snap-in spring element affixed to the support structure first part and which snaps into a corresponding recess in the support structure second part.

Claims 11: A rearview mirror assembly as in claim 1, further including a cover removably attachable to the support structure first part, removal of the cover exposing the locking mechanism.

Claim 12: A rearview mirror assembly for a vehicle, the rearview mirror assembly comprising:

- a support structure for mounting the mirror assembly to the vehicle, the support structure including a first part for substantially permanent connection to the vehicle and a second part for selective connection to the first part, the support structure including a snap-in detent apparatus including a spring element affixed to the first part and a recess in the second part for receiving the spring element;

- a support arm on which at least one mirror is mounted, the second part of the support structure being disposed on the support arm;

- a locking mechanism disposed on the support structure for selectively

locking together the first and second parts of the support structure to thereby secure the support arm and mirror to the vehicle; and

a cover removably attachable to the support structure first part, removal of the cover exposing the locking mechanism and the spring element.

Claim 13: A rearview mirror assembly as in claim 12, wherein the locking mechanism is a key activated locking mechanism.

Claim 14: A rearview mirror assembly as in claim 12, wherein the locking mechanism is mounted on the first part of the support structure for selectively lockingly engaging the second part of the support structure.

Claim 15: A rearview mirror assembly as in claim 11, wherein the support structure first part includes a clamp receptacle affixed to the vehicle, and the support structure second part includes an insertable component inserted into the clamp receptacle in an inserting direction, further including a slidably installed clamping wedge on the insertable component, the wedge, upon pushing of the insertable component, clampingly locking the insertable component and the clamping wedge to the clamp receptacle.

Claim 16: A rearview mirror assembly for a vehicle, the rearview mirror assembly comprising:

a support structure for mounting the mirror assembly to the vehicle, the support structure including a first part for substantially permanent connection to the vehicle and a second part for selective connection to the first part, the support structure including a snap-in detent apparatus including a spring element affixed to the first part and a recess in the second part for receiving the spring element, the support structure

first part including a clamp receptacle affixed to the vehicle, and the support structure second part including an insertable component inserted into the clamp receptacle in an inserting direction, further including a slidably installed clamping wedge on the insertable component, the wedge, upon pushing of the insertable component, clampingly locking the insertable component and the clamping wedge to the clamp receptacle;

a support arm on which at least one mirror is mounted, the second part of the support structure being disposed on the support arm;

a locking mechanism disposed on the support structure for selectively locking together the first and second parts of the support structure to thereby secure the support arm and mirror to the vehicle, the locking mechanism being mounted on the first part of the support structure for selectively lockingly engaging the second part of the support structure; and

a cover removably attachable to the support structure first part, removal of the cover exposing the locking mechanism and the spring element.

Claim 17: A rearview mirror assembly as in claim 16, wherein the locking mechanism is a key activated locking mechanism.

Claim 18: A rearview mirror assembly as in claim 1, further including an adjustment mechanism attached to the support arm, the adjustment mechanism configured to allow the support arm to be pivoted relative to the vehicle.

Claim 19: A rearview mirror assembly for a vehicle, the rearview mirror assembly comprising:

a support structure for mounting the mirror assembly to the vehicle, the

support structure including a first part having a substantially permanent connection to the vehicle and a second part;

the support structure first part includes a clamp receptacle affixed to the vehicle, and the support structure second part includes an insertable component inserted into the clamp receptacle in an inserting direction, further including a slidably installed clamping wedge on the insertable component, the wedge, upon pushing of the insertable component, clampingly locking the insertable component and the clamping wedge to the clamp receptacle;

a support arm mounting at least one mirror, disposed on said first part of the support structure and the second part of the support structure being disposed on the support arm; and

a locking mechanism disposed on the support structure for selectively locking together the first and second parts of the support structure for securing the support arm and mirror to the vehicle, the locking mechanism including a key activated mechanism including a key cylinder mounted on the first part of the support structure and a rotatable latch member operatively connected to and rotatable via the key cylinder for selectively lockingly engaging with the second part of the support structure.

Claim 20: A rearview mirror assembly as in claim 19, wherein the clamping wedge is slidable on the insertable component in a direction at right angles to the inserting direction of the insertable component.

Claim 21: A rearview mirror assembly as in claim 1, wherein the support structure includes a snap-in detent arrangement.

Claim 22: A rearview mirror assembly as in claim 21, wherein the snap-in detent

arrangement includes a snap-in spring element affixed to the support structure first part and which snaps into a corresponding recess in the support structure second part.

Claim 23: A rearview mirror assembly as in claim 1, further including a removable cover attachable to the support structure first part for covering the locking mechanism.

Claim 24: A rearview mirror assembly as in claim 22, further including a removable cover attachable to the support structure first part, said cover covering the locking mechanism and the snap-in spring element.

Claim 25: A rearview mirror assembly as in claim 1, wherein the latch member is hook-shaped.

9. *Evidence Appendix*

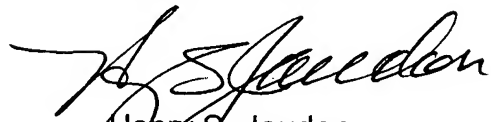
(None)

10. *Related Proceedings Appendix*

(None)

Favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. S. Jaudon", written in a cursive style.

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